

expectations of board members or to have an answer the next time an administrator asks, "Have we thought about putting that on the Web?" Is it for publicity and public relations? Is it to help preserve fragile materials by reducing their handling? Is it to provide the greatest possible access to the treasures your constituents have entrusted to you for safekeeping?

*Does our institution hold materials worth all of this effort?*

Do you hold unique materials or are they the same items held by many other regional collections? Would your holdings be of interest to users searching from home?

*Do we have administrative support for the project?*

Does the boss know what you are up to, and does he or she think it's a good idea? Is the board aware of the resources required? Are the different divisions, branches, or sections of the organization willing to collaborate to make this digitization project successful?

*Do we have the financial and technical support available to sustain a digitization project?*

Where is the extra money going to come from? Who is capable of fixing the inevitable glitches that accompany any project requiring wires, plugs, and a bit of electricity? Who do you have on staff that can "mark-up" the online collection so that it can "speak" to search engines? Can you find appropriate training opportunities, and, once again, where is the extra money going to come from?

*Do we have the copyright to the materials we wish to digitize?*

Do you hold permission letters, or use agreements? Can you get them? Is there any way to determine who holds copyright on your materials?

*Are we willing to commit our institution to the long-term maintenance of our online creation?*

Who will answer the reference questions generated by the online collection? Have you factored in the migration of the digital exhibit into hardware upgrades? Have you assigned space and made arrangements for the preservation of the backups and archived digital materials created by the project?

If you know why you are going to digitize and are content with those reasons, if you hold materials worth the effort and have the support of administrators, if you have the financial and technical underpinnings, and if you are committed to sustaining the effort for the long haul, then you may be ready to begin the digitization process--but creating digital images is still a few steps away.

## **Collaboration**

Cultural institutions have long known the value of collaboration: interlibrary loan, traveling exhibitions, joint conservation centers, and consortial disaster plans demonstrate the willingness and advantages of collaboration. The advent of new technologies has extended